

On August 12, 2002, NASA released for comment a Draft Announcement of Opportunity (AO) for the Explorer Program: Small Explorers (SMEX) and Missions of Opportunity. NASA has made numerous changes to the Draft AO.

The more significant changes include:

- The NASA OSS Cost cap for Small Explorer (SMEX) missions has been increased to \$120M (FY03). (Section 4.4.2 of the Draft AO)
- An increased emphasis on adequate cost reserves to mitigate cost risk has been added. It is essential that projects budget an adequate level of reserves during development, and that sufficient reserves for unforeseen problems, commensurate with mission complexity and risk, be included within the NASA OSS Cost. (Sections 3.2, 3.6.3, 4.5, 5.5, 7.2.4, 7.4.5)
- To accommodate the increased funding requirements for the SMEX missions and to allow a longer development time for missions that are 50% more expensive than those in the 1999 SMEX AO, the anticipated launch dates have been delayed from the dates presented in the Draft AO by six months. The launch of the first SMEX mission is anticipated to be around August 2007; the launch of the second SMEX mission is anticipated to be around August 2008. The proposed launch date must be no later than August 2008. Note however that this change does not diminish the proposer's ability to propose any launch date so long as it is no later than August 2008. (Sections 1.3, 4.4.1, 5.3)
- The cost of providing transportation on the Space Shuttle to the International Space Station (ISS) for attached payloads must be included within the NASA OSS Cost cap. These costs include transportation costs, standard services costs, and special services (mission unique) costs. A new document, *International Space Station Transportation and Services Information*, providing information on these costs will be added to the Explorer Program Library prior to the release of the AO. (Section 3.4.5, Appendix C)
- A new category of Mission of Opportunity has been added. Proposals may be submitted to conduct a new science mission using a NASA spacecraft or other asset after its primary science mission has been completed. The proposed investigation must constitute a new science investigation and may not be an extension, supplement, redirection, or follow-up of the spacecraft's original science mission or any previously approved mission extensions. (New Section)
- The general data policies have been modified. It is expected that data will be released as soon as possible after a brief validation period appropriate for the mission. The time required to complete this process should be the minimum necessary to provide appropriate data to the scientific community and the general public and must be described in the proposal. However, a short proprietary period for data may be proposed with justification. The proposed proprietary period should be the shortest period that is consistent with optimizing the science return from the mission and, except under exceptional circumstances, may not exceed six months. (Section 3.3.1)
- Additional guidelines have been added regarding software independent verification and validation (IV&V). If the IV&V self-assessment indicates some level of IV&V will be needed, it is recommended that proposals to this AO include 15% of their software costs for IV&V activities. (Section 3.4.1)

- Additional guidelines have been added regarding data management during Phase E, mission operations and data analysis (MO&DA). (Section 3.3.1, Appendix C)

For additional clarifications, potential proposers should refer to the Draft SMEX AO FAQ on the SMEX Acquisition Additional Information Page at <http://explorer.larc.nasa.gov/explorer/smexacq.html>.

NASA still expects to release the AO, evaluate proposals, and select missions for Phase A concept studies according to the schedule provided in the Draft AO.

Many dozens of changes and clarifications have been made to the Draft AO. In addition to the listed changes, the revised Draft AO incorporates a large number of additional changes including both policy changes and changes to proposal submission requirements. Many sections have been clarified since the release of the Draft AO. All proposers are urged to read the AO carefully when it is released since all proposals must comply with its requirements, constraints, and guidelines.